

Title: MULTI-BIT STACKED-TYPE NON-VOLATILE MEMORY AND MANUFACTURE METHOD THEREOF

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Cross Reference to Related Applications

[0001] This application claims priority of Taiwan Patent Application Serial No. 092117091 entitled "Multi-Bit Stacked Non-Volatile Memory and Manufacturing Method Thereof", filed on June 24, 2003.

Field of the Invention

[0002] The present invention relates to a non-volatile memory and the manufacture method thereof, and more particularly, to a multi-bit stacked-type non-volatile memory and the manufacture method thereof.

Background of the Invention

[0003] Conventional memory components can be classified into two categories: Random Access Memory (RAM) and Read Only Memory (ROM). The data stored in RAM will disappear immediately after power supply is turned off, and thus RAM is also known as volatile memory. Contrarily, the data stored in ROM can be retained even without power supply. Therefore, ROM is also known as non-volatile memory. With the development of consumer electronics, ROM becomes more sophisticated. Various types of ROM emerge, such as Programmable ROM (PROM), Erasable & Programmable ROM (EPROM), Electrically Erasable & Programmable ROM (EEPROM), Flash Memory, and the likes. The flash memory becomes more and more popular because of noiseless, faster access, small in size, shock proof, and moisture proof relative to conventional

products. Therefore, the flash memory is widely used in digital camera, mobile phone, MP3 player, and the likes.

[0004] The flash memory has a grid of bit lines and word lines with a cell that has two transistors at each intersection. The two transistors are separated from each other by a thin oxide layer. One of the transistors is known as a floating gate and the other one the control gate. The floating gate, located between the silicon substrate and the control gate, is surrounded by an insulation layer and does not link to word lines, bit lines, or any other wires. While data is written into the flash memory, a voltage higher than the drain voltage is applied to the control gate, thus hot electrons near the tunnel is produced. The hot electrons then accelerate and finally jump into the floating gate. The hot electrons then become trapped in the floating gate to complete data writing.

[0005] However, the portable electronic products become smaller and smaller while the requirement of the data storage capacity becomes larger and larger. Therefore, the main target is to simultaneously raise the product reliability and cell density of the memory. Several kinds of multi-bit non-volatile memory structures, such as the SONOS structure with nitride layers as the storage nodes, attempt to provide the above target. However, the cell density of SONOS structure is restricted by the disturbance effect of the storage electrons. Furthermore, the characteristics of the nitride layer lead to poor data retention. Thus, long-term stability of the memory is decreased when the nitride layer is used as the storage node.

[0006] On the other hand, the stacked-type non-volatile memory structure in accordance with the present invention provides long-term stability, high cell density, and a manufacture method with self-aligned floating gate to minimize the photolithography processes.

Summary of the Invention

- [0007] It is one aspect of the present invention to provide a stacked-type non-volatile memory including spacer-shaped floating gates and the manufacture method thereof in order to reduce the component size, increase the density of the memory cell, and increase the capacity of the memory.
- [0008] It is another aspect of the present invention to provide a multi-bit stacked-type non-volatile memory without disturbance between storage electrons and the manufacture method thereof. Consequently, the long-term stability of the memory is increased.
- [0009] It is a further aspect of the present invention to provide a multi-bit stacked-type non-volatile memory including self-aligned spacer-shaped floating gate to decrease the manufacture difficulty and raise the component reliability.
- [0010] One embodiment of the present invention provides a multi-bit stacked-type non-volatile memory including a substrate, two dielectric islands containing arsenic, two source/drain region, two dielectric spacers, a gate dielectric layer, two spacer-shaped floating gates, an interlayer dielectric layer, and a control gate. The dielectric islands are disposed on the substrate and define an active area between two dielectric islands. Two dielectric spacers are respectively disposed on two side walls of the dielectric islands and over the substrate. The gate dielectric layer is disposed on the active area of the substrate. Two source/drain regions in the substrate are respectively located below two dielectric islands and formed by a thermal driving process to diffuse arsenic atoms from the dielectric islands into the substrate. Two dielectric spacers can prevent arsenic atoms from diffusing into the gate dielectric layer or other undesired areas. Two spacer-shaped floating gates are disposed on the gate dielectric layer and respectively located on two side walls of the dielectric spacers. The interlayer dielectric layer is disposed on the substrate

and covers at least the spacer-shaped floating gates. The control gate is disposed on the interlayer dielectric layer and fills the active area.

[0011] Another embodiment of the present invention provides a method of manufacturing the multi-bit stacked-typed non-volatile memory. The method includes the steps of forming a patterned dielectric layer containing arsenic on the substrate. The patterned dielectric layer defines a first opening, i.e. the active area, and the first opening exposes a portion of the substrate and a side wall of the patterned dielectric layer. A dielectric spacer is formed on the side wall of the patterned dielectric layer. A gate dielectric layer is formed on the exposed portion of the substrate. A source/drain region in the substrate is formed by a thermal driving process to diffuse arsenic atoms of the patterned dielectric layer into the substrate. A spacer-shaped floating gate is formed on a side wall of the dielectric spacer and over the gate dielectric layer. An interlayer dielectric layer is formed to cover the spacer-shaped floating gate, the patterned dielectric layer and the gate dielectric layer. At last, a control gate filling the first opening is formed on the interlayer dielectric layer.

Brief Description of the Drawings

[0012] Fig. 1A is a top-view of the multi-bit stacked-type non-volatile memory of one embodiment in accordance with the present invention;

[0013] Fig. 1B is a cross-sectional view along the line 3-3 in Fig. 1A;

[0014] Fig. 2A is a cross-sectional view of the multi-bit stacked-type non-volatile memory during the first photolithography process;

[0015] Fig. 2B is a cross-sectional view of the multi-bit stacked-type non-volatile memory while the patterned dielectric layer is formed;

- [0016] Fig. 3A is a cross-sectional view of the multi-bit stacked-type non-volatile memory while the conformal dielectric layer is formed;
- [0017] Fig. 3B is a cross-sectional view of the multi-bit stacked-type non-volatile memory while the dielectric spacer is formed;
- [0018] Fig. 4 is a cross-sectional view of the multi-bit stacked-type non-volatile memory while the gate dielectric layer and the source/drain region are formed;
- [0019] Fig. 5A is a cross-sectional view of the multi-bit stacked-type non-volatile memory while the conformal polysilicon layer is formed;
- [0020] Fig. 5B is a cross-sectional view of the multi-bit stacked-type non-volatile memory while the spacer-shaped floating gate is formed;
- [0021] Fig. 6A is a cross-sectional view of the multi-bit stacked-type non-volatile memory while the oxidization layer is formed to cover the spacer-shaped floating gate;
- [0022] Fig. 6B is a cross-sectional view of the multi-bit stacked-type non-volatile memory while the interlayer dielectric layer is formed;
- [0023] Fig. 7 is a cross-sectional view of the multi-bit stacked-type non-volatile memory during the second photolithography process; and
- [0024] Fig. 8 is a top-view of the multi-bit stacked-type non-volatile memory array of another embodiment in accordance with the present invention.

Detailed Description of the Invention

- [0025] The present invention provides a multi-bit stacked-type non-volatile memory 1 including spacer-shaped floating gates and the manufacture method thereof. Fig. 1A is a top-view of the multi-bit stacked-type non-volatile memory 1 of one embodiment in accordance with the present invention. Fig. 1B is a cross-sectional view along the line 3-3 in Fig. 1A.

[0026] Referring to Fig. 1A and 1B, the multi-bit stacked-type non-volatile memory 1 of the present invention including a substrate 2, two dielectric islands 42 containing arsenic, two source/drain region 6, two dielectric spacers 8, a gate dielectric layer 10, two spacer-shaped floating gates 12, an interlayer dielectric layer 14, and a control gate 16. The substrate includes a silicon substrate. The materials of the dielectric islands 42 include Arsenosilicate Glass (ASG). The dielectric islands 42 are disposed on the substrate 2, and define an active area 18 between two dielectric islands 42, wherein each of the dielectric islands includes a side wall. Two dielectric spacers 8 are respectively disposed on two side walls of the dielectric islands 42 and over the substrate 2. The gate dielectric layer 10 is disposed on the active area 18. Common material of the gate dielectric layer 10 includes silicon oxide. Two source/drain regions 6 in the substrate 2 are respectively located below two dielectric islands 42. The source/drain regions 6 can be formed by a thermal driving process to diffuse arsenic atoms from the dielectric islands 42 into the substrate 2. Additionally, the two dielectric spacers 8 can prevent arsenic atoms from diffusing into the gate dielectric layer 10 or other undesired areas. Two spacer-shaped floating gates 12 are disposed on the gate dielectric layer 8 and respectively located on two side walls of the dielectric spacers 8. Common material of the spacer-shaped floating gate 12 includes polysilicon. The interlayer dielectric layer 14 is disposed on the substrate 2 and covers at least the spacer-shaped floating gates 12. Common material of the interlayer dielectric layer 14 includes silicon dioxide. The control gate 16 is disposed on the interlayer dielectric layer 14 and fills the active area 18. Common material of the control gate 16 includes polysilicon.

[0027] To write data into the multi-bit stacked-typed non-volatile memory 1 of the present invention, a voltage is applied between the control gate 16 and the source/drain region 6 to produce hot electrons moving into the spacer-shaped floating gate 12 and trapped therein.

To read data from the multi-bit stacked-typed non-volatile memory 1 of the present invention, the electron contained floating gate will be read as “zero” because of the threshold voltage effect, otherwise will be read as “one”.

[0028] Another embodiment of the present invention provides a method of manufacturing the multi-bit stacked-typed non-volatile memory. The multi-bit stacked-typed non-volatile memory 1 contains spacer-shaped floating gate and is formed by two photolithography processes in this method. Referring to Fig. 2A, a dielectric layer 21 containing arsenic is formed on the substrate 2. The substrate 2 includes silicon. The dielectric layer 21 includes Arsenosilicate Glass and can be formed by any well-known process, such as the chemical vapor deposition (CVD). The first photolithography process will follow to define a first opening 24, i.e. the active area. A patterned photoresist layer 22, which defines the active area, is formed on the dielectric layer 21. The dielectric layer 21 is etched by using the patterned photoresist layer 22 as a mask to form the patterned dielectric layer 4. A first opening 24 is formed after the etching process. Consequently, a surface 28 of a portion of the substrate 2 and the side wall 26 of the patterned dielectric layer 4 are exposed (Refer to Fig. 2B). After the etching process, the photoresist layer 22 is removed.

[0029] Referring to Fig. 3A, using known methods, such as CVD, form a conformal dielectric layer 32 covering the substrate 2 and the patterned dielectric layer 4. The conformal dielectric layer 32 can use any known dielectric material, such as silicon nitride. Anisotropically etching the conformal dielectric layer 32 forms the dielectric spacers 8 on the side walls 26 of the patterned dielectric layer 4. Referring to Fig. 4, a gate dielectric layer 10 is formed on the exposed portion of the surface 28 of the substrate 2 by using known process, such as thermal oxidation method or deposition method. The material of the gate dielectric layer 10 includes silicon dioxide. The source/drain region 6 is formed

by a thermal driving process to diffuse arsenic atoms of the patterned dielectric layer 4 into the substrate 2. The dielectric spacers 8 can prevent arsenic atoms from diffusing into the gate dielectric layer 10 or other undesired areas during the thermal driving process.

[0030] Referring to Fig. 5A, using known methods, such as CVD, forms a conformal polysilicon layer 52 covering the gate dielectric layer 10, dielectric spacer 8 and patterned dielectric layer 4. Referring to Fig. 5B, anisotropically etching the conformal polysilicon layer 52 forms the spacer-shaped floating gate 12 on the side wall of the dielectric spacer 8 and the gate dielectric layer 10. Therefore, the spacer-shaped floating gate 12 is self-aligned so that the misalignment can be avoided during the manufacture process. In addition, due to the independent electron storage region in spacer-shaped floating gate 12, the electron disturbance effect can be reduced even when the component size decreases or the density of the memory cells increases.

[0031] The interlayer dielectric layer 14 is formed on the spacer-shaped floating gate 12 to separate the control gate 16 from spacer-shaped floating gate 12, i.e. to prevent short circuit. The method of forming the interlayer dielectric layer 14 includes thermal oxidation, deposition, combination of thermal oxidation and deposition, or other known separation techniques. Referring to Fig. 6A, a portion of the surface of the spacer-shaped floating gate 12 is thermally oxidized to form a oxidation layer 62 covering the spacer-shaped floating gate 12. Referring to Fig. 6B, the interlayer dielectric layer 14 is deposited by a chemical vapor deposition process to cover the patterned dielectric layer 4, spacer-shaped floating gate 12 and gate dielectric layer 10. Common material of the interlayer dielectric layer 14 includes silicon dioxide.

[0032] Referring to Fig. 7, using known methods, such as CVD, forms a polysilicon layer 64 covering the interlayer dielectric layer 14 and filling the first opening 24. The second

photolithography process will follow to define the word lines. A patterned photoresist layer 66, which defines the word lines, is formed on the polysilicon layer 64. The polysilicon layer 64 is etched by using the patterned photoresist layer 66 as a mask to form the control gate 16. At last, the patterned photoresist layer 66 is removed to form the multi-bit stacked-typed non-volatile memory 1 of the embodiment in accordance with the present invention.

[0033] It should be noted that although the above description recites a single memory cell as an exemplary embodiment, the skilled in the art should realize that the present invention could be a memory array. Fig. 8 is a top-view of the multi-bit stacked-type non-volatile memory array 11 in accordance with the present invention. In this embodiment, the multi-bit stacked-type non-volatile memory array 11 includes a plurality of the multi-bit stacked-type nonvolatile memory 1. Each memory 1 of the multi-bit stacked-type non-volatile memory array 11, as the fore-mentioned embodiment, includes a substrate 2, a patterned dielectric layer 4 containing arsenic, a source/drain regions 6, dielectric spacers 8, a gate dielectric layer 10, spacer-shaped floating gates 12, a interlayer dielectric layer 14, and a control gate 16. The multi-bit stacked-type non-volatile memory array 11 further includes a plurality of source/drain region 6, a plurality of dielectric islands 42 containing arsenic, and a plurality of control gate 16. Each two adjacent dielectric islands define an active area 18. The control gates 16 define a plurality of word lines, and the source/drain regions 6 define a plurality of bit lines. The source/drain regions 6 are formed by a thermal driving process to diffuse arsenic atoms from the dielectric islands 42 into the substrate 2.

[0034] The manufacture method and operation characteristics are the same as the single memory cell and are not elaborated here for conciseness.

[0035] The above description only sets forth preferred embodiment of the invention, and is not intended to limit the scope, applicability, or configuration of the invention in any way. Rather, various changes may be made in the function and arrangement of the elements described in the embodiment without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention. Thus, the protected scope of the present invention is as set forth in the appended claims.